

IN THE CLAIMS:

Rewrite the pending claims as follows:

1-81. (Canceled)

82. (New) A method for searching messages in a conversation-based message system, comprising:

at a client, responding to receipt of a query from a requestor, the query having one or more query terms, including:

transmitting the query over a network to a conversation management system;

receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations

that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list having a respective conversation identifier, and wherein each conversation comprises one or more messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet first predefined criteria and at least one conversation in the list of conversations comprises a plurality of messages; and

presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor, each conversation in presented portion of the list being represented as a single item.

83. (New) The method of claim 82, wherein the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with second predefined criteria.

84. (New) The method of claim 82, wherein the second predefined criteria includes a date/time value of a most recently received message of a respective conversation.

85. (New) The method of claim 84, wherein the second predefined criteria includes a date/time value of a most recently received message of a respective conversation relevant to the search query.

86. (New) A method for displaying messages, comprising:

at a server:

receiving a plurality of messages directed to a user, each message having a unique message identifier;

generating a plurality of conversations, each conversation including a respective conversation identifier and unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages; and

responding to a search request from a client associated with the user, the search request including one or more user-specified query terms, including:

selecting a list of conversations from the plurality of conversations in accordance with the search request, each conversation in the list including at least one electronic message that matches the search request, at least one conversation in the list comprising two or more electronic messages; and

transmitting over a network to the client for display the list of conversations in an order determined in accordance with first predefined criteria, each conversation in the list being represented as a single item in the list of conversations.

87. (New) The method of claim 86, wherein the respective conversation identifier is distinct from a subject reference of the message.

88. (New) The method of claim 86, wherein the respective conversation identifier is based in part on information other than a subject reference of the message.

89. (New) The method of claim 86, wherein each conversation comprises messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet second predefined criteria.

90. (New) The method of claim 89, wherein the second predefined criteria include having a close temporal relationship among the unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages.

91. (New) The method of claim 89, wherein the common set of characteristics include the subject reference of the messages and at least one characteristic of the messages other than the subject reference.

92. (New) The method of claim 86, wherein the order is determined in accordance with a date/time of the most recent message in each conversation that is relevant to the query.

93. (New) A server system for searching messages, comprising:

one or more processors;

memory coupled to the one or more processors, the memory storing programs for execution by the one or more processors, the programs including:

a receiving module for receiving a plurality of messages directed to a user, each message having a unique message identifier;

a conversation module for generating a plurality of conversations, each conversation including a respective conversation identifier and unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages;

a query response module for responding to a search request from a client associated with the user, the search request including one or more user-specified query terms, including:

instructions for selecting a list of conversations from the plurality of conversations in accordance with the search request, each conversation in the list including at least one electronic message that matches the search request, at least one conversation in the list comprising two or more electronic messages;

instructions for transmitting over a network, for display on the client, the list of conversations in an order determined in accordance with first predefined criteria, each conversation in the list being represented as a single item in the list of conversations.

94. (New) The server system of claim 93, wherein the respective conversation identifier is distinct from a subject reference of the message.

95. (New) The server system of claim 93, wherein the respective conversation identifier is based in part on information other than a subject reference of the message.

96. (New) The server system of claim 93, wherein each conversation comprises messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet second predefined criteria.

97. (New) The server system of claim 96, wherein the common set of characteristics includes having a close temporal relationship among the unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages.

98. (New) The server system of claim 96, wherein the common set of characteristics includes a subject reference of the messages and at least one characteristic of the messages other than the subject reference.

99. (New) The server system of claim 93, wherein the conversations are prepared for presentation to the user in an order determined in accordance with a date/time of the most recent message in each conversation that is relevant to the query.

100. (New) A system for searching messages in a conversation-based message system, comprising:

in a client:

one or more processors;

memory coupled to the one or more processors, the memory storing:

a search module for receiving a query from a requestor and transmitting the query over a network to a conversation management system, the query having one or more query terms;

a receiving module for receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list having a respective conversation identifier and at least one message relevant to the query, and wherein at least one conversation of the list of conversations comprises two or more messages of the plurality of messages; and

a presentation module for presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor, each conversation in presented portion of the list being represented as a single item.

101. (New) The system of claim 100, wherein the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with predefined criteria.

102. (New) A computer program product storing programs for execution by one or more processors of a server computer system, the computer program product comprising:

instructions for receiving a plurality of messages directed to a user, each message having a unique message identifier;

instructions for generating a plurality of conversations, each conversation including a respective conversation identifier and unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages; and

instructions for responding to a search request from a client associated with the user, the search request including one or more user-specified query terms, including:

instructions for selecting a list of conversations from the plurality of conversations in accordance with the search request, each conversation in the list including at least one electronic message that matches the search request, at least one conversation in the list comprising two or more electronic messages; and

instructions for transmitting over a network to the client for display the list of conversations in an order determined in accordance with first predefined criteria, each conversation in the list being represented as a single item in the list of conversations.

103. (New) The computer program product of claim 102, wherein the respective conversation identifier is different from a subject reference of the message.

104. (New) The computer program product of claim 102, wherein the respective conversation identifier is based in part on information other than a subject reference of the message.

105. (New) The computer program product of claim 102, wherein each conversation comprises messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet second predefined criteria.

106. (New) The computer program product of claim 105, wherein the common set of characteristics includes having a close temporal relationship among the unique subset of the plurality of electronic messages.

107. (New) The computer program product of claim 105, wherein the common set of characteristics includes a subject reference of the messages and at least one characteristic of the messages other than the subject reference.

108. (New) The computer program product of claim 102, wherein the instructions for preparing prepare the list of conversations for display in an order determined in accordance with a date/time of the most recent message in each conversation that is relevant to the predefined query.

109. (New) A computer program product storing programs for execution by one or more processors of a client computer system, the computer program product comprising:

instructions for receiving a query from a requestor, the query having one or more query terms, and responding to receipt of the search request, including:

instructions for transmitting the query over a network from the client computer system to a conversation management system;

instructions for receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list

having a respective conversation identifier and at least one electronic message relevant to the query, and wherein each conversation comprises one or more messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet first predefined criteria and at least one conversation of the generated list of conversations comprises two or more messages; and instructions for presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor, each conversation in presented portion of the list being represented as a single item.

110. (New) The computer program product of claim 109, wherein the conversations are presented to the requestor in an order determined in accordance with second predefined criteria.

111. (New) A client system, comprising:

processor means; and

memory means coupled to the processor means;

the client system including:

means for responding to a query from a requestor, the query having one or more query terms, and responding to receipt of the search request, including

means for transmitting the query over a network to a conversation management system;

means for receiving from the conversation management system a list of conversations that match the one or more query terms, each of the conversations in the list having a respective conversation identifier and at least one message that matches the one or more query terms; wherein each conversation of comprises one or more messages sharing a common set of characteristics that meet predefined criteria and at least one conversation of the received list of conversations comprises two or more messages; and

means for presenting at least a portion of the list of conversations to the requestor, each conversation in presented portion of the list being represented as a single item.